AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Amend paragraphs of the specification as shown below.

[0009] Broadvision (http://www.broadvision.com) provides solutions in the area of personalization, marketing and promotional tools for web sites. This company's web site enables companies to cross-sell items, that is, selling similar or related versions, or up-sell items, that is, newer versions, to shoppers based on previous purchases in their shopping basket, and communities of which they are members. The main focus and emphasis of Broadvision is an end-to-end application for rapid deployment and dynamic personalization of high transaction volume retail e-commerce sites. However, Broadvision does not use a rule-based approach to automatically generate linkage between different articles.

[0010] Dynamo Personalization Server (http://www.atg.com) is a rule-driven personalization platform based on the Dynamo Application Server. Dynamo Personalization Server allows targeting specific content to a particular user or group of users based on business rules created by business managers. It combines explicit user data from existing marketing databases with implicit information gathered on user behavior, and other related sources of information. According to the specifications of this product, it does not allow cross-selling based on rules regarding the items and does not offer enabling technology to enhance a database system to provide retail item associations.

[0011] The Rules-Based Merchandising engine of the Annuncio Bright product (http://www.annuncio.com) allows marketers to create a new program (for sales, marketing) based on their expertise. According to the product data sheet, the merchandising engine offers the following services: It enables marketers to apply their merchandising expertise to create successful programs. It further features a guided rules builder and supports many criteria, such as shopper profile, product, catalog, services, content. It also encourages mixing of criteria to create dynamic offers.

[0013] The Blaze Advisor product (http://www.blazesoft.com) focuses on the creation of "business rules" that are the basis of an application. It allows the creation of rules down to the

level of item attributes. As with the rules-based merchandising engine of the Annuncio Bright product, which was discussed earlier, the result of the Blaze Advisor rule creation does not automatically enhance a database. Furthermore, since the rules created by the Blaze Advisor product are used during runtime, they are not independent of the underlying database system. As used herein, "runtime" means the rules are applied while the program is executed. The alternative would be to precompute the result of applying the ruleset and then access its results during runtime. There is therefore still a need for a method that performs a pre-computation to write association information into a database such that the related items can be easily found and accessed during runtime.

[0021] FIG. 1 is a high level block diagram of an exemplary overall environment in which a shopping server proposal system of the present invention may be used;